



February 2, 2007

Dear Friends:

This week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) asked me to serve as a member of the bipartisan Congressional Ethics Task Force. This eight member task force is charged with examining the creation of an independent, outside ethics body to enforce the chamber's ethics rules. The task force will report its recommendations back to Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. [Click here to read the article in Roll Call newspaper.](#)

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, I introduced the *Diploma Integrity Protection Act* (H.R. 773), legislation to protect students from so-called "diploma mills" that that sell fraudulent degrees while requiring little or no academic work. Lax law enforcement and technological advances such as the internet and email have resulted in the proliferation of diploma fraud. [Click here to read the full release.](#)

Global climate change was the subject of this week's first hearing of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. In the hearing we examined reports of the Bush administration's political interference to stifle the work of government climate change scientists. [Click here to read my opening statement regarding global warming and the Bush administration's interference in science.](#)

Last year, Republicans set up a colossal budget failure by passing a FY07 Budget that lacked support on both sides of the aisle. Republicans then went on to pass only 2 of 11 appropriations bills for FY07. These failures created the worst budget mess since the government shut down in 1996, leaving agencies, states and localities in fiscal limbo for months.

The new Democratic Congress is committed to cleaning up the fiscal mess Republicans left behind. This week, 229 Democrats were joined by 57 Republicans to pass a continuing budget resolution (H.J.Res. 20 – final vote 286 to 140), that will fund the priorities of American families, put our fiscal house in order, and clean up the Republicans' mess. The legislation:

- Increases funding for veterans health care by \$3.6 billion to provide health care for 325,000 veterans.
- Fully funds 31,359 FBI positions, including 12,213 agents, and 2,577 intelligence analysts, thereby doubling the number of intelligence analysts since 9/11.
- Helps more than 5.3 million students pay for college through an increase in the Pell Grant.
- Provides increased special education grants to better serve the 6.9 million children in America with disabilities.
- Delivers new funding for 6,700 schools that failed to meet the standards set by No Child Left Behind and increase funding for Head Start.
- Finances the construction of 300 new or expanded health centers that will serve 1.2 million new patients.

- Funds an additional 500 research projects through the National Institutes of Health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Betty", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum  
Serving Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District

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